

NEWS RELEASE

*OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS*

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For Immediate Release

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Ronald J. Tenpas, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that on July 27, 2005, **ROBERT R. BANKS**, age 53, of Country Club Hills, Illinois, was sentenced in United States District Court in Benton, Illinois. BANKS, who had previously pled guilty to conspiracy to distribute cocaine, two counts of distribution of cocaine, and distribution of marihuana, was sentenced to 360 months' imprisonment, 10 years supervised release and was fined \$1400.

The violations took place between 1998 and February 22, 2003, in Jackson and Williamson Counties. BANKS received an enhanced sentence because a firearm was used during the drug offenses. BANKS's sentence was further enhanced based on his use of a juvenile during the drug conspiracy.

The investigation was conducted by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Carbondale Police Department, Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Murphysboro Police Department, pursuant to those agencies' participation in the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative in the Southern District of Illinois. Under the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors are working together to prosecute drug dealers, felons in possession of firearms, and criminals that use firearms to commit violent offenses or drug trafficking offenses. The Jackson County Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative is a joint and cooperative effort of the United States Attorney's Office, Jackson County States Attorney's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, Carbondale Police Department, Jackson County Sheriff's Office, Southern Illinois Enforcement Group, and Murphysboro Police Department.

The case was assigned to Assistant United States Attorney Amanda A. Robertson for prosecution.